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ALTERNATE SECURITY ARCHITECTURES FOR EAST ASIA FROM THE ASEAN PERSPECTIVE

BY

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This paper discusses the foundations of U.S. strategy towards the defense of Asia and proposals for enhanced multilateral security cooperation to respond to the altered strategic environment in the region. The most well-developed proposals for expanding existing forums for security dialogue, or creating new ones, are those structured around Southeast Asia's regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Consequently, this paper looks at the issue primarily from the ASEAN perspective. The paper concludes with suggestions as to the directions U.S. policy might take to respond to the growing desire among governments of the region to modify the existing security architecture. The recommended policy option is to pursue the establishment of broadly inclusive sub-regional multilateral dialogues as a means to deal with regional threats and to keep the U.S. positively engaged in this vital region. Such an approach is compatible with a strong alliance structure. Moreover, supplementing our bilateral alliances with multilateral institutions would reaffirm U.S. commitment to East Asian security and alleviate concerns that the U.S. is pulling back over the horizon for domestic political reasons.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

ALTERNATE SECURITY ARCHITECTURES FOR EAST ASIA FROM THE ASEAN PERSPECTIVE

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper discusses the foundations of U.S. strategy towards the defense of Asia and proposals for enhanced multilateral security cooperation to respond to the altered strategic environment in the region. The most well-developed proposals for expanding existing forums for security dialogue, or creating new ones, are those structured around Southeast Asia's regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Consequently, this paper looks at the issue primarily from the ASEAN perspective. The paper concludes with suggestions as to the directions U.S. policy might take to respond to the growing desire among governments of the region to modify the existing security architecture. The recommended policy option is to pursue the establishment of broadly inclusive sub-regional multilateral dialogues as a means to deal with regional threats and to keep the U.S. positively engaged in this vital region. Such an approach is compatible with a strong alliance structure. Moreover, supplementing our bilateral alliances with multilateral institutions would reaffirm U.S. commitment to East Asian security and alleviate concerns that the U.S. is pulling back over the horizon for domestic political reasons.

INTRODUCTION

The world is now experiencing a fundamental transformation of the international system. The ideological conflict of the Cold War is flickering out, if not yet extinguished. The collapse of the Soviet Union has left the United States as the world's only economic and military superpower and shifted the international balance away from strategic bipolarity dominated by superpower competition to a more complex multipolarity. The realignment of the international system has inspired governments everywhere to review the relevance of existing economic and security structures that derived their rationale from the ideological and military conflicts of the Cold War.

Regionalism is emerging as a key trend in the new world order.[1] Countries of the world's disparate regions have begun the process of redefining existing institutions and building new structures to ensure their security and strengthen themselves in the global economic competition. Although most apparent in Europe and North America, the trend towards greater economic integration, and towards multilateral regional security arrangements, is also well under way in the East Asia region.

This paper will examine recent developments in the process of greater regional involvement in the maintenance of a stable post-Cold War security environment in the East Asia region. Historically, stability in that region has been preserved by a forward-based U.S. military presence founded on a network of bilateral alliances. With the end of the Cold War, Asians are

beginning to think about, and prepare for, a possible future in which the U.S. is no longer the principal guarantor of regional security, but only one of several major actors.

Asian governments are now actively debating how best to institutionalize a security dialogue and new patterns of cooperation that will deal with emerging sources of instability, and, at the same time, keep the U.S. engaged in the region as a benign balancer. This paper will discuss the foundations of current U.S. strategy toward the defense of Asia and proposals for enhanced multilateral security cooperation to respond to the altered strategic environment of the region. The paper will conclude with suggestions as to the directions U.S. policy might take to respond to a growing desire among governments in the region to modify the existing security architecture.

Currently, the most well-developed proposals for expanding existing forums for security dialogue, or creating new ones, are those structured around Southeast Asia's regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). For that reason, this paper will focus on ASEAN, looking primarily at proposals for forums of regional cooperation proposed by, or that include, ASEAN. Consequently, the paper will also look at regional threats and security issues from a Southeast Asian perspective. The very different, and perhaps more pressing, security problems of Northeast Asia will be considered only to the extent they have a direct impact on Southeast Asian thinking or on U.S. policy.

FOUNDATIONS OF U.S. STRATEGY

The U.S. Alliance Structure:

The driving U.S. strategic goal in Asia and the Pacific during the Cold War era was to create a series of security agreements designed to contain the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, as well as their communist allies in North Korea and Indochina.[2] To that end, the U.S. established bilateral treaty ties with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand, and the multilateral ANZUS pact between the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

After the unification of Vietnam in 1975, and throughout the 80's, the U.S. sought to strengthen indigenous Asian capabilities to defend against internal or external Communist threats by providing military and economic aid to friendly and allied states. The U.S. did not, however, under the Guam Declaration (Nixon Doctrine) of 1969, continue to guarantee direct U.S. military involvement against further Communist aggression in Southeast Asia.[3]

The stability created by the U.S. alliance structure and forward-based military presence in Japan, Korea and the Philippines, combined with U.S. willingness to underwrite financially the defense of the region, generated the conditions which enabled the economies of Japan, the "little dragons" of Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, and now Southeast Asia, to prosper. Former Secretary of State James Baker, among other

officials of the Bush Administration, expressed the view that the U.S. military presence and U.S. political commitment to the security of the region have been the principal elements fostering the stability that secured four decades of unprecedented economic dynamism in East Asia.[4] The U.S. has been a beneficiary of this prosperity and increased economic interdependence; East Asia now accounts for about 35 percent of U.S. international trade.[5]

Current U.S. Policy:

The demise of communism as a persuasive ideology, the end of the Soviet threat and growing international economic competition forced the administration of President Bush to reexamine the validity of both its global and regional strategies. The President's national security strategy, released in 1990, replaced a global strategy based on containment of communism with a strategy oriented to the critical regions of the world. Derived from the national strategy document, the East Asia Strategic Initiative (EASI) report to Congress in 1992, reaffirms U.S. interests in that region and asserts that existing security arrangements, with some modification, are the best means to protect those interests.[6]

The policy of the Bush Administration, as described in the EASI, towards security structures in the East Asia region was to maintain the existing architecture and to be skeptical of proposals for altering that structure. The security arrangements the U.S. developed in the region, essentially a loose network of

bilateral alliances originally intended to deter Soviet aggression, were determined to be well-suited to advancing fundamental U.S. interests: commercial access to the region; freedom of navigation; and the prevention of the rise of any hegemonic power or coalition hostile to the U.S.[7] The EASI concluded that the existing alliance structure provided the flexibility required to manage the unexpected and to accommodate the different security priorities of, for example, Northeast and Southeast Asia.

Writing in Foreign Affairs in late 1991, Secretary Baker described the Bush Administration's vision of the post Cold-War U.S. security arrangements in East Asia as follows:

> To visualize the architecture of U.S. engagement in the region, imagine a fan spread wide, with its base in North America and radiating west across the Pacific. The central support is the U.S.-Japan alliance, the key connection for the security structure and the new Pacific partnership we are seeking. To the north, one spoke represents our alliance with the Republic of Korea. To the south, others extend to our treaty allies -- the Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries of the Philippines and Thailand. Further south a spoke extends to Australia -- an important, staunch economic, political and security partner. Connecting these spokes is the fabric of shared economic interests now given form by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process.[8]

This system, Secretary Baker and other administration officials argued, was responsive to the multiplicity of security concerns that differ from country to country within the region. These arrangements were not, in their view, invalidated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the only threat commonly perceived throughout the region. Rather, the Bush Administration argued,

the existing arrangements remained well-suited to what it considered the primary rationales for U.S. defense engagement in the region: "to provide geopolitical balance, to be an honest broker and to reassure against uncertainty."[9]

U.S. Security Policy in Southeast Asia:

Secretary Baker described U.S. relations with the countries of ASEAN as the "core of our engagement in this dynamic subregion."[10] Two ASEAN countries, the Philippines and Thailand, are bilateral treaty allies. With the other ASEAN countries the U.S. maintains friendly and growing security relationships.[11] With the departure of U.S. forces from the Philippines at the end of 1992, the U.S. has sought to sustain an adequate security presence in Southeast Asia on a more diversified basis through a series of bilateral agreements providing enhanced access for U.S. military forces to Southeast Asian facilities.

A 1990 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and Singapore, for example, permits an increase in U.S. use of Singapore's ship maintenance and repair facilities; the rotational deployment of U.S. aircraft to Singapore's airfields; and the stationing of a small contingent of U.S. personnel to support these activities. This agreement is representative of the U.S. approach to maintaining a presence in the region through "a network of bilateral arrangements that facilitate training, exercises and interoperability, which in lieu of permanent bases, will permit the U.S. to remain engaged in the region."[12]

In addition to its bilateral treaties with Thailand and the Philippines, and the MOU with Singapore, the U.S. maintains an active program of training, exercises, ship visits and repair, information exchanges and dialogue with Indonesia and Malaysia. Sensitive to political attitudes in these countries supportive of non-alignment, U.S. policy has been to allow the pace of expanding security ties to be determined by the "needs and concerns of our friends."[13] ASEAN governments have not sought to transform the organization into a collective security pact and the U.S. has been supportive of this position.[14]

EAST ASIA SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

ASEAN Proposals for Multilateral Security Dialogues:

Southeast Asia has been an example of regional cooperation since 1967 when ASEAN was founded. ASEAN's membership now includes Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines and Indonesia. Although the process of bringing Vietnam and Laos into ASEAN began in 1992, these countries are not expected to become fully integrated participants in ASEAN's councils for several more years. Conceived as primarily an economic organization, ASEAN is now faced with the challenge of creating or enhancing security cooperation and dialogue to cope with new circumstances, specifically the emergence of threats from such regional powers as China, and the potential disequilibrium in the regional power balance brought on by the withdrawal of the

permanent U.S. military presence from the Philippines.[15]

ASEAN has shied away from proposals that would create new regional security structures or dialogues, including the proposal to initiate a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia patterned after the CSCE in Europe.[16] Instead, government officials and academics from the ASEAN states prefer one or another of two related proposals for building a new multilateral framework based on existing ASEAN conferences.[17]

The initial proposal, made by Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas at the annual ASEAN ministerial meeting in Brunei in 1989, envisioned the expansion of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) into a forum for an institutionalized security dialogue.[18] The PMC, an annual conference immediately following the meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers (AMM), is a meeting centered around discussions between the ASEAN foreign ministers and their counterparts from the seven dialogue partners: the United States, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the European Community. Historically, the ASEAN PMC agenda had been devoted principally to economic and political issues.

Subsequent discussions within ASEAN refined the Indonesian initiative into three alternatives: the simple inclusion of security issues on the PMC agenda; an expansion of the PMC to embrace China, Russia and perhaps India, first as observers and eventually as full dialogue partners; and a separate forum, as an adjunct to the PMC, with membership open to all the major regional powers.[19]

Indonesia continued to be the major proponent of an expanded role for the PMC. Jusuf Wanandi, head of Indonesia's government-supported Strategic Studies Institute, argued the principal advantage to using the PMC as a vehicle for regional dialogue is that it already incorporates most of the regional powers and China, Russia and Vietnam are all potential candidates for inclusion in the future. Furthermore, the ASEAN PMC process has had experience in successfully addressing security issues, particularly the problem of a peace settlement in Cambodia.[20]

The ASEAN PMC meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 1991 witnessed a consensus on adopting a graduated approach to expanding the PMC agenda in the direction of a regional security dialogue.[21] Japanese Foreign Minister Nakayama endorsed the proposal to utilize the ASEAN PMC as a vehicle for security dialogue and the U.S. voiced no objection to an incremental move in this direction. In January 1992, the ASEAN Heads of State, at a summit in Singapore, formally approved the inclusion of security issues in the PMC agenda. As a consequence of this decision, the Manila PMC in July 1992 marked a departure for ASEAN by focussing to an unprecedented extent on security issues.[22]

The concepts of initiating a separate regional security dialogue that would follow the ASEAN PMC or to expand the PMC to immediately involve countries that are not already members remain under discussion within ASEAN.[23] These options, referred to as the ASEAN PMC-plus and the post-PMC dialogue, continue to receive support from Southeast Asian government officials and academics.

Proponents of these alternatives argue it is important to involve all major regional powers in a broadly-based security discussion. At present, the governments of the ASEAN states and the dialogue partners have not reached a consensus on whether to move in this direction because of concern for the potential political problems that would ensue were China, Vietnam and Russia to be brought to the table under current circumstances.

Top-Down Approaches to Security Dialogues:

In addition to the concepts for building on the ASEAN PMC process, there are other proposals that envision organizing a regional dialogue from the top, down. Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, for example, in March 1990 called for the establishment of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Asia, based on the European model of the CSCE, an idea originally espoused by Soviet President Gorbachev in 1985. The suggestion has not been well-received in Southeast Asia where a CSCA is viewed as unsuited to the complexities of Asia's security problems and as a threat to ASEAN's influence.[24]

A similar suggestion, made in April 1992 by Australian Prime Minister Keating, involves the use of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process as a forum for security dialogue. Most of the states of the region, with the exception of Russia, are involved in APEC and the forum is open to expanding its membership.[25] The disadvantage is that APEC, a new organization, has been strictly oriented toward economics and there is

resistance within its membership to expanding its role. Both Indonesia and the U.S., for example, have responded guardedly to the initiative.[26]

From the ASEAN perspective, the CSCA approach suffers from two major drawbacks. First, the ASEAN states have stopped short of endorsing a broad, multilateral security forum out of concern that such an arrangement would undermine ASEAN's influence on matters important to their security interests. Second, ASEAN leaders have drawn from the CSCE's failure to resolve the Yugoslavian conflict the lesson that a multilateral security conference is frequently ineffectual in situations in which the parties are bent on conflict.[27]

U.S. Skepticism Toward New Structures:

The Bush Administration's cautious approach to proposals for altering the existing structure through the formalization or creation of new multilateral regional security forums or alliances was clearly enunciated by Secretary Baker. While welcoming ad-hoc arrangements aimed at specific security issues, Secretary Baker expressed U.S. skepticism towards new structures that lacked a specific focus:

> Asian security is increasingly derived from a flexible, ad hoc set of political and defense interactions. Multilateral approaches to security are slowly emerging. As we have seen in the Cambodia peace process, the combined efforts of the ASEAN countries, Japan, Australia and the U.N. Security Council Permanent Five have tailor-made a conflict-resolution process. A semiofficial forum on the contested islands of the South China Sea, hosted recently by Indonesia, also reflects such an ad-hoc, multilateral apprcach.

> Guaranteeing stability on the Korean peninsula may increasingly assume a multilateral form -- a solution suited to the character of the problem. At this stage of a new era we should be attentive to the possibilities for such multilateral actions without locking ourselves in to an overly structured approach. In the Asia-Pacific community, form should follow function.[28]

Consistent with the conservative approach laid out by Secretary Baker, the Bush Administration's policy was to support a regional security dialogue at the annual ASEAN PMC as the primary East Asian forum for multilateral security discussions. Conversely, the Bush Administration discouraged initiatives to pursue new structures for regional security discussions.

Prior to the January 1992 ASEAN Summit, the U.S. proposed to ASEAN that the PMC should remain the major forum for a regional security dialogue. At the same time, the U.S. expressed its interest in expanding the regular bilateral ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue -- a meeting of sub-cabinet officials -- to include discussion of security issues. Finally, the U.S. expressed its intention to continue to send high-level government officials to participate in an unofficial capacity in regional academic conferences that address security issues.[29]

During the 1992 Manila PMC, the U.S. continued to take no initiative towards expanding discussions at the PMC to include an exchange of views with those countries -- China, Russia and Vietnam, for example -- attending as observers but not included in the closed PMC sessions between the six ASEAN countries and their dialogue partners. The ASEAN governments, mindful of their security concerns about China and of their interest in keeping

the U.S. engaged as an active economic and defense partner, have accommodated the U.S. position.[30]

REGIONAL SECURITY TRENDS AND CONCERNS

ASEAN's View of the U.S. Role:

The overriding security concern the ASEAN countries face -- the possible emergence of a regional power disequilibrium brought on by a too precipitous U.S. disengagement -- has led them to express collectively a desire for the U.S. to play a stabilizing role in region. At the Manila meeting of their foreign ministers in July 1992, all six members of ASEAN, for the first time, openly called for the U.S. to maintain the military balance in the region.[31] The cornerstones of regional stability in the ASEAN view are a commitment by the U.S. to maintain a military presence in the western Pacific to act as a stabilizer and a deterrent, and to keep intact its mutual defense pact with Japan. Goh Chok Tong, Singapore's Prime Minister expressed the view that, although ASEAN members might speak in different tones about the U.S. presence in the region, "I believe all of us understand its value in maintaining an equilibrium."[32]

The fact ASEAN agreed to proclaim its support for a U.S. military presence is in part the product of changes in U.S. policy during the Bush Administration. Current U.S. policy is to no longer seek permanent bases with extensive infrastructure in the region. Instead, the U.S. has sought to negotiate access

agreements for U.S. forces to make use of facilities belonging to the states in the region. The current U.S. emphasis on access agreements for naval and air forces offers ASEAN states the assurance that the U.S. will remain engaged and capable of speeding forces to the region in the event of crisis. At the same time, access agreements do not arouse the same nationalistic opposition that permanent bases would among certain politically influential segments of the populations of the ASEAN countries.[33]

The China Problem:

The willingness of Indonesia and Malaysia, the two members of ASEAN historically most concerned with maintaining an official posture of non-alignment, to fully endorse a continued U.S. military presence reflects new ASEAN concerns over China as a threat to regional stability. China has emerged in the ASEAN perspective as a potential regional threat, primarily as a consequence of its aggressive pursuit of its territorial claims in the South China Sea, an area disputed between China, Taiwan, Vietnam and three of the six ASEAN states.[34] China's assertion of its sovereignty over the Spratly Islands include areas that are claimed by Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines. Conflict over the islands is driven by economic considerations -- the area is believed to contain major oil reserves -- and strategic interest in controlling important sea lines of communication.[35] Also, ASEAN governments fear China's military is intent on establishing control over the Spratly's as a base for projecting

China's power into Southeast Asia at a time when the U.S. military presence is declining.[36]

In a departure from earlier practice of muting regional security concerns, the ASEAN Foreign Minister's meeting in Manila in 1992 issued a statement on the South China Sea that urged the settlement of all sovereignty and jurisdictional claims without resorting to force. The statement suggests that ASEAN is now confident enough to dictate a code of conduct that would apply even to the region's strongest power, China. Another indication of ASEAN's new-found willingness to challenge China was the decision to invite Vietnam and Laos -- states whose relations with China have been strained -- to sign the 1976 ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as a step towards eventual integration into ASEAN.[37] By adhering to the treaty, Vietnam and Laos are bound to adhere to ASEAN's principles for regional cooperation and procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes.[38]

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MODIFIED SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

U.S. Policy Options:

There is broad political agreement in the U.S. that the declared strategy of active engagement in the region represents a sound basis for promoting U.S. economic, political and security interests in East Asia.[39] U.S. friends and allies in the region generally agree their own security and economic interest are also enhanced if the U.S. continues to play the role of regional

balancer by maintaining its security commitments and a military presence in the region. At issue is not whether the U.S. should remain strategically engaged in East Asia, but how it should do so. The available policy options can be defined as follows:

-- Shift towards a regional collective security architecture through expanded (APEC) or new (CSCA) multilateral institutions and/or dialogues.

-- Maintain the existing bilateral security architecture but with an increased emphasis on sub-regional or regional dialogues through such existing institutions as the ASEAN PMC and APEC.

-- Integrate the two approaches by seeking to expand and institutionalize more inclusive multilateral dialogues at the sub-regional, but not at the regional, level.

The latter option would, at a minimum, involve the expansion of discussions at the ASEAN PMC to include an exchange of views among all of the foreign ministers attending, including those from China, Vietnam and Russia. This option might also include the establishment of a new sub-regional dialogue on Northeast Asia, perhaps along the lines envisioned by Canada,[40] as well as broadening participation in the various South Pacific dialogue forums. Whether these latter proposals are viable, however, is beyond the scope of this paper, limited as it is to a Southeast Asian perspective. Consequently, the following analysis of the options will discuss their respective strengths and weaknesses primarily as they apply to ASEAN and to U.S. involvement in

Southeast Asia.

A premise of the discussion is that the U.S. is the only country capable of acting as a catalyst for establishing a more stable equilibrium in East Asia. The U.S. is still perceived throughout East Asia as a benign actor, and its claim to a leadership role is widely accepted. No other regional power has the military and economic power, and the political credibility, to replace the U.S. as the primary designer or guarantor of a regional security architecture.

The New Collective Architecture Option:

Proposals for a shift towards a new collective security architecture -- based on one Asia/Pacific regional institution -- have received no official support from any country in the region, with the exception of Australia. The reason for this official rejection lies in the fact that there is no single threat commonly perceived across the region that would constitute the basis for collective action.[41] Instead, there are a multiplicity of security concerns that vary among the three principal sub-regions: Southeast Asia; Northeast Asia; and the South Pacific. Given the broad consensus among East Asian governments that an Asia/Pacific collective security institution or forum would have questionable relevance to the resolution of existing conflicts, a view shared strongly by the Bush Administration, this policy option is impractical under present circumstances.[42]

The Enhanced Status Quo Option:

The Bush Administration presented a cogent argument in favor of a policy of enhancing sub-regional dialogue on security issues only through existing institutions.[43] The relevant institution for Southeast Asia was considered to be the ASEAN PMC with no change in its present participation. Support for the ASEAN PMC as the principal vehicle for a security dialogue had several advantages from the Bush Administration's perspective. First, its procedures were established and familiar. Second, the limits on membership -- open only to friends and allies of the U.S. -- was seen as compatible with a free and productive dialogue on potentially sensitive security issues. Finally, the ASEAN PMC has a successful track-record, for example on international efforts to resolve the Cambodian conflict.

However, a policy of reliance on existing bilateral security arrangements, combined with a discussion of security issues at the ASEAN PMC, does not appear to provide a sufficient basis for either crisis response or resolution of the major sources of tension in Southeast Asia. Specifically, the current security structure appears inadequate to respond to the principal threat to stability in the region: conflicting claims to the South China Sea involving China, the region's strongest military power. Nor is the current structure sufficient to address the broader issue of ensuring U.S. engagement in the region.

The existing ASEAN PMC dialogue structure also is unsuited to dealing with intra-ASEAN disputes that might flare into

conflict because ASEAN controls the agenda at the PMC. Virtually all the ASEAN states have unresolved border claims that generate tension and potential armed conflict. The more serious include the Philippine claim to the Malaysian state of Sabah, and a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia over islands off the island of Borneo (Kalimantan). Illegal migration from the poorer ASEAN states to the more wealthy, encroachment into and conflicts over the boundaries of EEZ's are other sources of tension.

The Integrated Option -- Sub-Regional Multilateralism:

U.S. pursuit of a policy directed at the establishment of a modified security structure for Southeast Asia, and perhaps a new architecture for all of East Asia, based on broadly inclusive sub-regional multilateral dialogues could provide a better means for the U.S. to remain positively engaged in this vital region. There are significant foreign and domestic advantages to such a policy.

First, a more explicitly multilateral U.S. approach to addressing Southeast Asia's defense concerns would serve to broaden the context of U.S. security involvement in that sub-region, thereby solidifying the political basis for the ASEAN governments to enter into access agreements with the U.S.

The governments of Indonesia and Malaysia, in particular, face domestic political opposition to strong bilateral defense relationships with the U.S. The reasons for this opposition include deeply-entrenched attitudes favoring non-alignment and

neutrality, and suspicion of U.S. intentions among both nationalistic and Islamic elements of their populations. These governments will be better able to defend access agreements with the U.S. to their publics when these agreements can be portrayed as consistent with an ASEAN consensus on the need for each member country to help sustain a continued U.S. military presence.

Second, a broadly inclusive multilateral dialogue based on the ASEAN PMC would provide a means of dealing with the security problem posed by China. The principle of including a country that represents a potential threat in multilateral dialogue, in an effort to instill the habit of consultation and discourage unilateral action, is one that has been successfully applied in other parts of the world, including the Middle East and Europe.

China's inclusion in the ASEAN dialogue could be structured in such a way so as not to conflict with existing closed-door discussions between ASEAN and the dialogue partners (the Six-plus-Six meeting) or the bilateral discussion between ASEAN and the U.S. (the Six-plus-One meeting). Rather, China, as well as Russia and Vietnam, could be accommodated in a new, all-inclusive session whose agenda could be set based on consensus among all participants.

Another argument in favor of China's inclusion in the ASEAN PMC structure is that the U.N. cannot be counted on to address any conflict that involves China directly because of China's veto power in the Security Council. The current regime in China can be expected to continue to seek influence in East Asia and the

Pacific as well as other regions of the world independent of that of the U.S. and Europe which it still deems to be ideological and geopolitical rivals. Bringing China into the ASEAN PMC would constitute an added mechanism for constraining China's international behavior.

Also, Russia's participation in the ASEAN PMC would seem to be advantageous from the U.S. perspective. The U.S. has declared itself to be committed to a new partnership with Russia in global affairs. Russia is a Pacific power and a major player in Northeast Asia, although not in Southeast Asia. Bringing Russia into the ASEAN PMC process could be a first step towards broadening Russia's involvement in discussions of East Asian security.

There are also U.S. domestic considerations that argue in favor of an integrated, multilateral approach to U.S. engagement in East Asia. The U.S. military is undergoing a considerable reduction in its force structure, driven by the disappearance of the Soviet threat and budgetary concerns. Further pressure from Congress and the Clinton Administration to make additional cuts into the U.S. defense budget are anticipated.

With its primary forces increasingly configured to respond to regional contingencies, the U.S. defense strategy will emphasize access to staging areas and facilities kept in readiness by countries aligned strategically with the U.S.[44] At the same, with fewer forces and fewer financial resources, the U.S. government will find it increasingly difficult to support

overseas training exercises and deployments. Although the constraints will apply around the world, they will be particularly noticeable in Southeast Asia where the U.S. now conducts a series of exercises on a strictly bilateral basis. COBRA GOLD in Thailand and COPE SLING in Singapore, for example, are justified by U.S. security commitments to those individual countries. Although no alternatives exist in East Asia for similar realistic training at reasonable cost, pressure may mount to cut these exercises in order to focus resources on the defense of other countries whose security is determined to be more central to U.S. interests.

However, the security of ASEAN as a whole is, in fact, broadly recognized as an important U.S. interest both in Congress and the new Administration. The executive branch of the U.S. government would be in a better position to convince Congress of the need for exercises in Southeast Asia if these exercises were clearly identified as a integral component of a U.S. strategy for maintaining stability in the sub-region. That does not mean that existing bilateral exercises would have to become multilateral, only that these exercises would become part of a Southeast Asia U.S. security strategy supported by ASEAN.

Conclusion:

A multilateral approach to Southeast Asian security is compatible with the maintenance of a strong alliance structure of bilateral ties. A multilateral approach based on an inclusive

ASEAN PMC would help create a reasonable balance between preserving effective bilateral security cooperation and the requirement for an institutionalized dialogue suited to crisis resolution and strategic reassurance in the region. Such a dialogue would include discussions of sources of tension and the promotion of confidence-building measures designed to improve predictability and stability in relations among ASEAN states and between ASEAN and the major regional powers.

U.S. interests dictate that it remain a Pacific power. To accomplish this goal, any U.S. policy design must be perceived by the countries of East Asia as capable of also addressing their own security concerns. An explicitly multilateral approach would reaffirm the U.S. commitment to East Asian security and alleviate concerns that the U.S. will pull back over the horizon for domestic political reasons.

Finally, it is not prudent for U.S. policy-makers to assume that East Asia will remain a relatively peaceful place because ad-hoc security discussions are taking place and potential aggressors in their region are consumed with domestic problems. The sources of international tension in East Asia are troublesome exactly because they have the potential to explode into armed conflict with little warning. U.S. policy-makers need as many tools as possible to apply positive leverage in East Asia. Supplementing our bilateral alliances with strengthened multilateral institutions would give U.S. policy-makers one more means to influence the course of events in this dynamic region.

END NOTES

[1] Jason D. Lewis, "Southeast Asia -- Preparing for a New World Order," Washington Quarterly (Winter 1993): 187.

[2] Sheldon W. Simon, "Regional Security Structures in Asia: The Question of Relevance," in Collective Security in Europe and Asia, ed. Gary L. Guertner (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1992), 29.

[3] Ibid.

[4] James A. Baker, III., "America in Asia: Emerging Architecture for a Pacific Community," Foreign Affairs 70 (Winter 1991-92): 3-6.

[5] Admiral Charles R. Larson, "Uncertainties, Turbulence Head Concerns," Defense 92 (July-August 1992): 33.

[6] See Department of Defense, A Strategic Framework for the Asian Pacific Rim: Report to Congress, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1992), 2-6.

[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] Baker, 4-5.

[9] Ibid., 5.

[10] Ibid., 13.

[11] A Strategic Framework for the Asia Pacific Rim, 25.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] For a discussion of ASEAN's concerns regarding collective security see Amitav Acharya, "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Security Community or Defense Community?" Pacific Affairs 64 (Summer 1991): 159-178.

[15] Leszek Buszynski, "ASEAN Security Dilemmas," Survival 34 (Winter 1992-93): 91.

[16] Dr. Bilveer Singh, "Confidence Building, Security Measures and Security Regimes in Southeast Asia," Asian Defence Journal (March 1992): 7.

[17] Jason D. Lewis, "Southeast Asia -- Preparing for a New World Order," Washington Quarterly (Winter 1993): 189.

[18] Buszynski, 102.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Jusuf Wanandi, "Peace and Security in Southeast Asia," Indonesian Quarterly 19, no. 4 (1991): 324.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Rodney Tasker, "ASEAN: Facing Up to Security." Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 August 1992, 8.

[23] Lewis, 189.

[24] Lewis, 190.

[25] Buszynski, 102.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 103.

[28] Baker, 5-6.

[29] This description of U.S. diplomatic initiatives is based on the author's interviews with officials of the U.S. Department of State with personal knowledge of the issues. These officials prefer not to be cited by name.

[30] Raphael Pura, "ASEAN, Wary of Chinese Moves, Offers Guidelines to Solve Territorial Disputes," The Asian Wall Street Journal, 27 July 1992, p. 2.

[31] Tasker, 8.

[32] Michael Richardson, "ASEAN Opts for Closer Security Ties," Asia-Pacific Defense Reporter 18 (April-May 1992): 33.

[33] Buszynski, 104.

[34] See Rodney Tasker's article for a detailed description of the Spratly dispute.

[35] For a discussion of the interests of the various parties to the conflict and the progress of efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the dispute see Buszynski.

[36] Far Eastern Economic Review, "South China Sea: Treacherous Shoals," 13 August 1992, 14-15.

[37] Tasker, 9.

[38] For a discussion of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, see Muthiah Alagappa, "Regional Arrangements and International Security in Southeast Asia: Going Beyond ZOPFAN," in Contemporary Southeast Asia 12 (March 1991), especially p. 275.

[39] Among the critics of the Bush Administration's implementation of its East Asia security policy who agree with this basic tenet are Robert Scalopino and Donald Hellman. See Robert A. Scalapino, "The United States and Asia: Future Prospects." Foreign Affairs 70 (Winter 1991-92): 19-40. Also see Donald C. Hellman, "The United States in Asia in an Age of International Upheaval." Current History 91 (December 1992): 401-406.

[40] For a discussion of this proposal see Ambassador Peggy Mason, "Asia Pacific Security Forums: Rationale and Options: Canadian Views," Statement Presented to the 6th Asia Pacific Roundatable, Kuala Lumpur, June 1992.

[41] Richard J. Ellings and Edward A. Olsen. "A New Pacific Profile," Foreign Policy 89 (Winter 1992-93): 128.

[42] For those interested in a discussion of the advantages of this type of security structure, see Trevor Findlay, "Asia Paacific Confidence- and Security- Building Measures," Pacific Research (November 1992): 24-25.

[43] See Baker, op. cit.

[44] Scalopino, 38.

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